

The Only Way For the Seals To Stay Here

By JOHN PORTER

Tribune Sports Writer

FEB 5 1975

The man who may keep the Seals in the Bay Area calls himself a nut, but he's not nutty enough to save the hockey franchise as a tax write-off.

"The basic criterion for buying this team is whether a group of people can come together, buy a hockey franchise, make it go and make a profit," said Mel Swig, who is looking for assets, not debits.

The San Francisco hotel executive, owner of the Seals when they were a Western League box-office success at the Cow Palace, heads a group of about 10 individuals who may merge with a smaller group to buy the Seals from the National Hockey League.

Frankly, they may not put up the money. In that case, the NHL will move the franchise or dissolve it.

The decision isn't expected soon, so the Seals will be at the Arena tonight when the Washington Capitals, 0-25 on the road, are supposed to show up for an 8 o'clock faceoff.

"Honestly," said Swig, "I'm a hockey nut. We'll make every effort to keep the Seals here. There still is some interest in buying the team."

Swig also admitted that there is talk of building a privately-financed arena in San Francisco to eventually house the Seals, but wouldn't elaborate.

However, The Tribune has learned that the plans for the building are beyond the talking stage.

Club President Munson Campbell is impressed with Metropolitan Sports Center in Bloomington, Minn., which is home ice for the Minnesota North Stars. Many of its features may be incorporated in the proposed S.F. building.

"I think those running the Seals are doing a good job," said Swig, who had no praise for previous managements of seven NHL seasons. "Munson is doing a damn good job. He's as dedicated a guy as I've ever met."

Swig said the present success or failure of the Seals on the ice will have no bearing on the possible purchase of the franchise. He considers it to be a young, exciting team with potential for the future.

Also, he says there's no pressure to make an immediate decision on whether to buy the team.

"That will be a couple of months down the road before we decide," he said. "Probably, it will be after the season ends."

The league is expected to offer the franchise to the Swig people for less than they bought out Charles Finley a year ago.

Swig did say his group hasn't made an offer, nor has the league told him what it would take to buy the Seals.

So the future of the Seals here depends on the merger of two groups that must come up with the money to buy the team from the NHL and build an arena in San Francisco.

Seals on the Road To Somewhere?

By JOHN PORTER
Tribune Sports Writer

Dave Gardner is beginning to show some good moves, the kind that might move the California Seals closer to the playoffs.

"Even though it was only Washington, this was a big win for us," he said after scoring two goals Wednesday night. "You have to start somewhere."

The Seals may go nowhere if they don't beat the Pittsburgh Penguins tonight when they face off at 8 o'clock in the Arena.

Once paired with the Seals as the National Hockey League's failing franchises about to be moved, the Penguins label reports that they are endangered as specious.

Pittsburgh compiled an 8-3-2 record last month and extended their home unbeaten string to 16 games.

Coming to Oakland for the first time this season, the Penguins have three wins over the Seals in Pittsburgh. In one of those games they put 25 shots on the California net in one period.

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Penguins

Cont. from 1st Sports Page

"No question Pittsburgh will be tougher," said coach Bill McCreary, who will have center Larry Patey back in the lineup tonight after missing the Caps' game because of a concussion.

Winger John Stewart, nursing a groin injury, also is expected to play, but a team spokesman was uncertain whether forwards Jim Moxey and Charlie Simmer, called up for Wednesday's game, will suit up tonight.

Gardner, Ron Huston and Stan Weir centered the Seals' lines against Washington, so Patey's return gives the club another regular centerman.

Huston led the team with five shots on goal, but his Wrecking Crew couldn't score. They've been blanked in their last three games.

"Don't worry," said left wing Dave Hrechkosy. "We'll be back."

NOTES: Tonight is another skate night with a free skate after the game for fans who bring skates...Seals right wing Al MacAdam moved ahead of Hrechkosy in the NHL rookie race and was third with 32 points after scoring once and assisting twice against the Caps...The Penguins have the rookie leader in 18-year-old Pierre Larouche (20-25-45), who was 94-157-251 last season in junior hockey...Gilles Meloche and Penguin Michel Plasse are expected to be in goal...Plasse has 5-1-3 record with Montreal, Kansas City and Pittsburgh against the Seals...MacAdam is tied with Joey Johnston for team scoring lead.

Seals in Danger of Flunking Out

FEB 27 1975

By JOHN PORTER

Tribune Sports Writer

On the equipment door in the Seals' dressing room is a chart that shows the team how well it is doing against Toronto in the standings.

It's a graph much like the ones in schools which show which class has the highest percentage of PTA membership.

School is almost over for the Seals this season.

The Minnesota North Stars, unlikely teachers considering their downhill slide, delivered a 3-1 blow to the Seals at the Arena last night.

approaching for Toronto fans who saw Al MacAdam score on a first period power play for a 1-0 California lead. We didn't skate as a unit," said a downcast Stan Weir, who assisted on the club's lone goal.

There was frustration enough for the Seals, who now trail Toronto and that last playoff spot in the Adams Division by 14 points.

Coach Bill McCreary wasn't ready to give up his job just yet, although he may when the season ends.

He said that Jack Evans, who coaches the Seals' successful minor league team in Salt Lake City, will be recommended for the job if the Mel Swig group buys the Seals.

One group that won't buy the Seals is the outfit in Seattle. Headed by Vincent Abbey, president of the Seattle Totems, they have

decided to wait for an expansion franchise for 1976-77.

However, the National Hockey League expects a completed offer for the Seals from the Denver group on Saturday.

Final disposition of the California Golden Seals, either to the Rockies or to the Swig people, may take place at a New York meeting March 10.

McCreary, who doubles as the Seals director of hockey operations, went behind the bench

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after firing Marshall Johnston
Jan. 20.

With Johnston and former coach Fred Glover still on the payroll, McCreary couldn't hire a new face with the NHL counting its pennies.

"That's one of the reasons," McCreary agreed. "There's always the controversy with the league watching the budget."

Watching the game was disappointing for 4,571 fans who saw Al MacAdam score on a first period power play for a 1-0 California lead.

Minnesota got that one back 16 seconds later, then added two more.

"The team was going along so well, there's no reason to do anything off of this one game," said McCreary. "We can't make wholesale changes."

The DHO-coach also revealed that any trades the team might make before the March 15 deadline would be minor ones. The league wants to sell the goods the way they

now stand.

"There wasn't a positive action all night," the coach added about the Seals hesitation-style of play. The team had more luck kicking the puck than passing it.

Referee Lloyd Gilmour was forced to call two tripping penalties, two for hooking and one when the North Stars had too many men on the ice. It wasn't one of the roughest games of the season.

"We didn't skate as a unit," said a downcast Stan Weir, who assisted on the club's lone goal.

"That's right," agreed teammate John Stewart. "We're not together."

McCreary had nothing to say to his team after the game. He prefers to wait until the next day.

"There's a lot of ill temper and sadness after a loss and it's difficult to get through to them," he said.

M S

FIRST PERIOD

- 0 1 Seals MacAdam (14:40)
(Weir, Neilson) 4:10
1 1 Minnesota Oliver (14:00)
(Goldsworthy) 5:00
2 1 Minnesota Rombough (10:00)
(Barrett, Gratton) 16:00

Shots on goal: Seals 11, Min. 7.
Penalties: Rombough, Min (tripping) 2:57

Simmer, Seals (tripping) 19:34

SECOND PERIOD

- 2 1 No scoring.
Shots on goal: Seals 8, Min 7.
Penalties: Min bench (too many men on ice, served by Bialowas) 2:05, Rombough, Min (hooking) 10:47.

THIRD PERIOD

- 3 1 Minnesota Cameron (4:00)
(Hexfall, Barrett) 10:05.
Shots on goal: Min 9, Seals 8.
Penalty: Reid, Min (hooking) 14:10.
Total shots: Seals 27, Min 23.
Goalies: Min, LoPresti; Seals, Mel-
oche.
3 stars: 1, Oliver, Min 2, MacAdam,
Seals 3, Reid, Min.
Referee: Lloyd Gilmour.
Att: 4,571.

Seals' Bidders Make Pitch

MAR 10 1975

By JOHN PORTER
Tribune Sports Writer

Larry Patey thinks he and the rest of the California Golden Seals won't move to Denver.

Of course, one must consider his sources. "Right now," he told some reporters last night, "we feel the team is staying here, but every time we pick up a paper the situation is different.

"How else are we going to find out what's happening except from reading what you guys write?" he asked.

Patey scored three goals at the Arena last night to help sink the New York Islanders, 4-2, before a Navy Night gathering of 5,899 at the Arena.

According to several sources in the league the odds favor San Francisco businessman Mel Swig's group over Ivan Mullanix of Denver for purchase of the Seals franchise from the National Hockey League.

Both buyers were scheduled to present their bids to the league finance committee for disposition of the team at a meeting in New York today.

Mullanix already has been awarded an expansion franchise for 1976-77, but hopes to join next season with the Seals in Denver.

Several NHL governors may be cooling off to the Denver move, according to one source, because Mullanix may lack the necessary liquid assets. However, a pro-

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Cont. from 1st Sports Page
posed merger with a Colorado brewery could change that.

The merger of the Swig group with members of a company that markets films, dolls, books and other items based on a comic strip could swing the deal for the Bay Area.

Of the five members in the finance committee, Chicago, Detroit and St. Louis appear to be leaning toward Swig. New York Rangers and Philadelphia could go either way.

Seals President Munson Campbell will make a pitch for the Swig group. His personal friendship with the owners of Detroit and Chicago was pivotal in gaining the Seals for Charles Finley five years ago and that influence hasn't diminished.

Additionally, St. Louis attorney Jim Cullen, the No. 1 candidate to be the league's next president, has met often with the Swig people and encouraged them to join the bidding.

Cullen also is counsel for the St. Louis franchise and is expected to endorse the Swig group.

Seals coach and director of hockey operations Bill McCreary took the red-eye flight to New York after the game to join Campbell, but before leaving McCreary recalled an earlier conversation with Patey.

"The way you're moving," the coach told Patey yesterday, "it's doubtful you'll get 20 goals this season."

FIRST PERIOD

NY 5

0	1	Seals	.....Patey (17)	
		(Simmer, Spring)	.....12:14	
0	2	Seals	.....Patey (18)	
		(Simmer, Christie)	.....19:29	
		Shots on goal: Seals 12, NY 8		
		Penalties: J. Potvin, NY (holding)		
		16:13, Hart, NY (interference)		
		17:29		

SECOND PERIOD

1	2	NY Islanders	.....Parise (19)	
		(Lewis, Westfall)	.....37	
1	3	Seals	.....Hrechkosy (27)	
		(Gardner, Hampton)	.....15:34	
		Shots on goal: NY 16, Seals 5		
		Penalties: Neilson, Seals (tripping)		
		4:14, Hampton, Seals (interference)		
		6:18, St. Laurent, NY (tripping)		
		10:42, Simmer, Seals (interference)		
		15:57		

THIRD PERIOD

2	3	NY Islanders	.....MacMillan (12)	
		(unassisted)	.....8:20	
2	4	Seals	.....Patey (19)	
		(Simmer, Christie)	.....19:44	
		Shots on goal: NY 13, Seals 9		
		Penalty: Fortier, NY (hooking)		
		7:17		
		Total shots: NY 37, Seals 26		
		Goalies: NY, Resch; Seals, Simmons		
		3 stars: 1, Patey, Seals. 2, Simmer, Seals. 3, MacMillan, NY.		
		Referee: Bruce Hood.		
		Att: 5,899.		

Palmer Group Seeks Seals, Would Move

MAR 1 2 1975
By ED SCHOENFELD
Tribune Sports Writer

It caught Mel Swig by surprise. All of a sudden, the National Hockey League revealed there's a new group headed by Bud Palmer interested in buying the Seals.

The part of the story the NHL didn't tell is that the Palmer group wants to move the Seals to Denver.

Nothing will happen until after May 1. The NHL will keep open negotiations until then. That pleases Swig. He says his San Francisco group had requested a May 1 deadline.

"I've got no clue," Swig said last night when he heard about Palmer. "I don't know the man at all."

Bud Palmer was identified by the NHL yesterday as the former New York Knicks' star and former New York City official greeter.

Actually, Palmer now lives in Vail, Colo. Last night he was flying to Munich, Germany for some TV work. Sources told The Tribune, however, that Palmer is in midst of putting together a group of Colorado men who want the Denver NHL team to be home-owned.

Strangely enough, the NHL Board of Governors yesterday agreed to award a conditional expansion franchise to Denver for next season.

Ivan Mullinex, a St. Louis real estate developer, is supposed to own the NHL rights in Denver. He claims the NHL yesterday granted him the expansion franchise there. The NHL didn't report it at the conclusion of its New York meeting, however.

"Where would Palmer's Seals brought play if he them to Denver?" Mullinex asked The Tribune. "I hold a 10-year lease on the 17,500-seat Sports Arena."

Even though Mullinex offered \$8 million to buy the Seals six months ago, there were reports last

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what what we'll do positively'
so I could tell my people what

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night that the NHL is listening to the Palmer group because Mullinex now can't put together all the money required for the expansion franchise.

"I don't think Palmer is very interested in keeping the Seals in Oakland," NHL president Clarence Campbell said after yesterday's meeting.

Campbell said there is still an open possibility that the Seals may yet wind up in a new city for the 1975-76 season.

"The status in California," Campbell said, "will depend on some rather extensive further negotiations which will be kept open until the first of May."

Then the NHL president came up with another statement that surprised Mel Swig.

Campbell admitted that if nothing is concluded by May 1, there is a possibility of disbanding the Seals franchise completely.

What's Swig's next move?

"Wait to hear from the NHL," the realtor-hockey nut responded.

"I'm waiting to hear that they accepted our proposal and that if I can put the package together by May 1 they'll award us the franchise."

Swig has not yet firmed up his group of "about 12" yet. It will be done, he said, when the NHL spells out its intentions.

"Up to this point," Swig explained, "we have never had a firm thing from the league telling us, 'Yes, this what what we'll do positively' so I could tell my people what it is."

"What I'm guessing is that they will give us what we have desired and until May 1 to put it together."

Swig, asked about the NHL possibly disbanding the Seals, said it might be a way the league figures it can escape its contract with the Coliseum. There are three more years to run on the contract.

The NHL, in effect, speeded up Denver's entry into the league by one year. There was no change in the other expansion club, Seattle, which will not start play until 1976-77.

The Denver team will join the Buffalo Sabres, Boston Bruins, Toronto Maple Leafs and the Seals in Division Four.

The new expansion team may be stocked through an expansion draft on June 17 during the NHL summer meeting at Montreal.

Frig Claims NHL Doomed Seals Chances

MAR 13 1975

By JOHN PORTER
Tribune Sports Writer

Len Frig says the National Hockey League deserves an assist on the goal that eliminated the California Seals from the playoffs.

Technically, that would be Danny Gare's goal early in the second period as the Buffalo Sabres routed the Seals out of Stanley Cup competition at the Arena last night, 7-2.

However, Frig, a regular defenseman all season, claims the Seals were doomed in the standings the fourth week in January when Marshall Johnston was fired as coach.

Now the uncertainty and confusion surrounding the league's announcement about the future of the Seals upset Frig even more.

"What do Clarence Campbell and the rest of the league think they're doing?" asked Frig. "Sure, we're losing money here, but it's their fault we've had bad management all around.

"They act as if we're the albatross hanging around their necks, but it's their fault. At least, that's the way it seems to the players on this team," he said.

What incenses Frig is the possibility the franchise may be dissolved, one of the alternatives the league announced it may take.

"That's great. They just scatter us everywhere around the other teams just so they can get out of the lease at the Arena. Clarence Campbell may fine me, but go ahead and write that," demanded Frig.

Another solution, one insider claims is more likely, is that San Francisco realtor Mel Swig will round up the investors to buy the Seals from the league before May 1.

Even that doesn't console Frig.

"Where this team is going has bothered us for the last two months," he said. "Sure, it has to affect our play.

"Half the team is renting right now because we don't know what's going to happen to the team. Even if I wanted to buy a house, so I could save some money on my income tax, I probably couldn't find anyone to sell me one if I told him I was with the Seals. They're not dumb. They read the papers.

"The guys on this club are living day-to-day. It's almost as bad as being a miner," pointed out Frig, who dug coal in the Alberta mountains as a teenager.

"You've got to fight your way up. I'm so frustrated now I'm not staying here a month after the seasons ends. I'm going home."

Several other Seals, according to Frig, are fed up.

"All the defense feels the way I do," he said. Teammate Mike Christie, a defenseman, nodded his

Players

Cont. from 1st Sports Page

head in agreement.

"Even if they said we were definitely moving to Denver, we might play better," claimed Frig. "But now it's to the point where we're a joke, even on the ice."

"When Lavvie (Brian Lavender) scored after the whistle, some of the Buffalo players skated by and said, 'That's the only way you guys can score.'"

Larry Patey scored twice for the Seals, giving him five goals in his last two games, but Frig had more bad news for Seals fans.

Patey, Joey Johnston, John Stewart, Jim Neilson and several of the better players in the farm system are unsigned for next season.

The World Hockey Association once again is moving in with contract offers, and although the Seals management is allowed to negotiate with players' agents, no Seals signings have been announced.

Stewart was another of the dejected Seals after the game.

"You know," he said. "It hit me today that this is the first time in four years I've been out of the playoffs. There are no ands, ifs or buts about it, and it has to affect you."

"Still, I'm working for personal goals," he added.

B 5

FIRST PERIOD

- 1 0 BuffaloKorab (11)
(unassisted)4:52
- 2 0 BuffaloMartin (4)
(Stanfield, Korab)13:36

Shots on goal: Buf 15, Seals 4
Penalties: Simmer, Seals (hooking)
4:24

Ramsay, Buf (interference) 7:54

SECOND PERIOD

- 3 0 BuffaloGare (24)
(Luce, Korab)3:03
- 3 1 SealsPatey (2)
(Spring, Christie)5:10
- 3 2 SealsPatey (21)
(Neilson, Spring)13:42
- 4 2 BuffaloStanfield (14)
(Martin)17:11

Shots on goal: Buf 16, Seals 9
Penalties: Greig, Seals (elbowing)
1:20

MacAdam, Seals (fighting) 5:21
Schoenfeld, Buf (fighting) 5:21

THIRD PERIOD

- 5 2 BuffaloRamsay (25)
(unassisted)5:51
- 6 2 BuffaloMcNab (18)
(Dudley, Korab)14:31
- 7 2 BuffaloMartin (44)
(Holt, Guevremont)18:39

Shots on goal: Buf 13, Seals 4
Penalties: Schoenfeld, Buf (roughing) :37, Holt, Buf (holding) 8:40
Perreault, Buf (hooking) 16:04
Total shots: Buf 38, Seals 21
Goalies: Buf, Crozier; Seals, Simmons.

3 stars: 1. Korab, Buf. 2. Patey, Seals. 3. Martin, Buf.
Referee: Bruce Hood.
Att: 4934

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SPORT

NHL Substantially Agrees to Offer by Swig

MAR 15 1975

By ED SCHOENFELD
Tribune Sports Writer

Mel Swig said last night the National Hockey League has "substantially" agreed with his group's terms to purchase the Seals.

The Seals would remain in Oakland, Swig assured, if the deal is completed. He would honor the existing contract with the Coliseum, which has three more years to run.

Now, Swig elaborated, it's up to his group, comprised of about a dozen people, to put the pieces together and be prepared to make the deal with the NHL by May 1.

"I think we are well on the road to firming up

our group," the San Francisco realtor said. "We need a little time to tell.

"Sure, I'm confident we can do it but I wouldn't say it's 100 per cent because nobody knows for sure. You never know until it's on the dotted line, sealed and delivered."

Swig said the group headed by Bud Palmer would be second in line behind his combine.

"Palmer would only be interested if the franchise was not in Oakland," Swig said. "If we fell on our face, he then might be a candidate for the sale of it."

Sources in Colorado, where Palmer lives, told The Tribune earlier this week that his group would

want the Seals to play in Denver.

Swig said his group had offered its terms to the NHL prior to the league's Board of Governors meeting this week in New York and requested the May 1 deadline.

"We wanted things finally spelled out for us," he said. "Now we know where we are and they've substantiated what we needed.

"We are now going through the details, working with accountants and lawyers, trying to button up the whole thing."

There had been reports that Swig wanted to move the Seals to San Francisco.

"That might be in the future if we had a place to

play," Swig said when asked about it.

"At this point there is a lease with the Coliseum and we have no plans to play except in the Coliseum.

"We want to keep the Seals in the Bay Area. That's for sure.

"We have no choice but to honor the Coliseum contract."

On the prospects of a new hockey arena in San Francisco, Swig said, "I would say there might be a possibility but it's down the road and we really don't know that yet.

"It probably would have to be a privately-built building," he added.

Swig would not disclose any details to the NHL of the proposal his group made to the NHL.

NHL's Top Objective: To Keep Seals Here

MAR 18 1975

By ED SCHOENFELD
Tribune Sports Writer

Clarence Campbell, president of the National Hockey League, is rooting for Mel Swig and his group to buy the Seals.

"Our No. 1 objective is to keep the Seals right where they are," Campbell declares. "It always has been.

"Purchase of the Seals by the Swig group would be by far the best solution," he told The Tribune today from the NHL's Montreal headquarters.

Campbell emphasized that the league has never lost its faith in Oakland.

"Our problem is that the cost of operations has escalated so greatly we just can't afford it anymore," he explained.

Campbell said the NHL has \$11 million invested in the Seals, which includes the purchase from Charles O. Finley, reported to have been \$6.5 million.

"I wouldn't want to create the impression we have a firm offer from the Swig group," Campbell said. "That's not true.

"The Swig group outlined the type of proposal it would be prepared to make to us," he elaborated. "In addition, they wanted to know if their offer would be reasonably acceptable. Some modifications were offered to them."

Campbell said the Swig group has first-refusal on the Seals until May 1.

Bud Palmer, former New York Knicks' star, now living in Vail, Colo., heads a group interested in buying the Seals and moving them to Denver.

Campbell said the group is comprised of people who have a big stake in Colorado and only want a franchise in Denver.

He said Palmer's best bet might be to go in partners with Ivan Mullinex, who already has been awarded a conditional expansion fran-

chise in Denver to start play next season.

"I think he is looking for partners," Campbell said about Mullinex, a St. Louis real estate developer.

The Oakland-Denver situations are integrated, Campbell said.

"If Swig, for some reason, decides he will not go ahead, then, obviously, Mullinex would be a logical purchaser of the Seals as an alternative to his expansion franchise."

Swig, a San Francisco realtor, is confident his group of about a dozen people will put the deal together in time, however.

Meanwhile, the NHL team in most danger of being moved for next season comes to town tomorrow night to face off against the Seals.

The Pittsburgh Penguins, whose \$500,000 debt to the league is due June 1, play the Seals at the Coliseum Arena, starting at 8.